

should pause to remember the enormous price paid by all Americans in our country's quest to realize its promise.

Juneteenth honors the end of the 400 years of suffering African Americans endured under slavery and celebrates the legacy of perseverance that has become the hallmark of the African American experience in the struggle for equality.

The poet Langston Hughes reminds us in his famous poem, "Mother to Son," life in America for African Americans "ain't been no crystal stair."

The post-bellum period in America was marked by violence and terrorism against African Americans as they sought to make real the promises of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Nowhere was the reign of terror to which they were subjected more horrific than the 1921 Tulsa-Greenwood Race Massacre, which occurred a century ago this past May 31 through June 1.

Tulsa's Greenwood District was known as "Black Wall Street," and was the most prosperous African American community in the United States.

The Greenwood community with a population of over 10,000 Black people had stores that sold luxury items, 21 restaurants, 30 grocery stores, a hospital, a savings and loan bank, a post office, three hotels, jewelry and clothing stores, two movie theaters, a library, pool halls, a bus and cab service, a nationally recognized school system, six private airplanes, and two black newspapers.

But on May 31st of that year, the 35 city blocks of Greenwood went up in flames, at least 300 Black persons were murdered and more than 800 were injured; it is estimated that not less than 9,000 were left homeless and destitute.

The message of the Tulsa Race Massacre was clear to Black America: "Stay in your place. Do not attempt to accumulate and bequeath wealth or own property. Remember your history in America is as chattel property."

If they were still alive, the domestic terrorists of the mob in Greenwood would see their evil reenacted—and then followed by a similar attempt to cover it up and foster collective amnesia—a century later in the siege and desecration of the hallowed halls of the U.S. Capitol, the 'Citadel of Democracy'.

It should not be overlooked that the source of the January 6 white mob's irrational anger, hatred, and violent reaction was that Black Americans voted in overwhelming numbers in Atlanta, Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, and other enclaves to oust the most pro-White supremacy President since the Civil War.

Some might ask "Why dwell on the past? Let us forget unpleasant things and move on into the future."

My answer is to quote the great southern writer William Faulkner: "The past is never dead. It is not even the past."

The hatreds, prejudices, resentments, and white supremacy that Black Americans witnessed and suffered in Greenwood a century ago are not dead; they are not even past.

So my message to the descendants of the survivors and victims of slavery, America's Original Sin, is to keep fighting for justice, to never be silent, to affirm the truth, and seek accountability.

In his famous Second Inaugural Address, President Lincoln spoke of the profound moral

debt owed for "all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil," and that the Civil War was the judgment of the Lord, which was "true and righteous altogether."

That debt remains to be paid, which is why African Americans have always peacefully petitioned the government for the redress of its grievances.

As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King said at the 1963 March on Washington:

"In a sense, we have come to our Nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir.

"This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

"It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked 'insufficient funds.' But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check—a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice."

In recent years, a number of National Juneteenth Organizations have arisen to take their place alongside older organizations—all with the mission to promote and cultivate knowledge and appreciation of African American history and culture.

Juneteenth celebrates African American freedom while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures.

But it must always remain a reminder to us all that liberty and freedom are precious birthrights of all Americans, which must be jealously guarded and preserved for future generations.

I am pleased to see this important legislation before this Committee on the eve of it becoming law.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF FORMER REPRESENTATIVE PAUL MITCHELL

#### HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

Mrs. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize former Michigan Representative Paul Mitchell. He served Michigan's 10th District from 2017 until his retirement at the beginning of this year. After being diagnosed with Stage IV renal cancer this month, he recently underwent multiple surgeries in addition to starting immunotherapy treatment. Even though my heart hurts for Paul and his family, I know he is courageous and brave, and I know he will fight through this illness.

Representative Mitchell served on numerous committees, including on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the House Committee on Armed Services. As a member of Congress, Representative Mitchell was a

champion for Michigan's families and small businesses, as well as a strong advocate for our armed forces and strengthening our national security.

As a colleague and a friend, Representative Mitchell has always been a man of principle and has been committed to working with others for the betterment of this nation. He's crossed party lines to work on police reform and joined the bipartisan fight to keep Michigan's Great Lakes safe and clean for all. In his last term as a Member of Congress, he notably stood up for democracy during the 2020 election even when it was an unpopular position for him to take. His bravery will be a part of his legacy.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking former Representative Paul Mitchell for his leadership and service. I join the entire Michigan delegation in sending our colleague Paul Mitchell and his family strength and love as he begins treatment and conveying our many thanks to the team at Henry Ford Health System for their continued care.

#### IN MEMORY OF PATRICIA O'SULLIVAN SRAMEK

#### HON. ALAN S. LOWENTHAL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in memory of Patricia O'Sullivan Sramek, a lifelong resident of Long Beach, California, an outstanding person, and a dear personal friend. Patti passed away suddenly in her home on June 16, 2021.

She is survived by her husband Nicholas, her children David and Bridget, her daughter-in-law Mary, her grandchildren Eleanor, Abraham, Ingrid and Levi, and her brother Patrick Burke. She was a sister-in-law to Debbie, Hilda and Kathy. She was a loving aunt to Patrick, April, Tom, Tracy, Alex and Carla. She was predeceased by her parents Patrick O'Sullivan and Marguerite (Margie) O'Sullivan.

Patti was born in 1942 in Long Beach, California. She grew up in West Long Beach, where she lived with her family, and attended Poly High School. She met her future husband Nick, whose family lived half a mile away on Delta Avenue. On July 27, 1968 they were married in a small ceremony at St. Lucy's Parish and their reception was held on a rainy afternoon in her parents' backyard—she always noted that the rain was good luck. She and Nick moved to North Carolina where he was enlisted in the United States Army at Fort Bragg. In August 1970 and September 1976, she and Nick welcomed their children into the world at Long Beach Memorial Hospital.

Patti held many jobs in her life including making milkshakes at Tom's Burgers on Santa Fe Avenue as a teenager and sewing pockets on pants in a factory in Sanford, North Carolina. She was a champion for the communities of the West Side and served as a Field Deputy for the City of Long Beach's Seventh Council District for many years. She was known for driving the neighborhood daily to spot sidewalks and streets that needed repairs and to visit with neighbors. Along with her brother Burke, Patti helped care for her aging parents Pat and Margie prior to their passing. She later retired and welcomed her four